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ABSTRACT

School psychologists must become better acquainted with basic principles of applying and communicating psychological interventions if they are to be accepted in the school setting. Psychological interventions are often ignored or improperly applied by school staff and parents, who perceive them as difficult, of little value, or inappropriate for a particular school setting. Thus it becomes the burden of the psychologist to communicate complex ideas and expected outcomes. School psychologists need to understand how change occurs in complex settings, how to find professional literature that deals with change, and how to incorporate these ideas and techniques into the actual practice of psychology in the school. Delivery of psychological services in schools is suggested as a series of steps: (1) define and clarify the problem; (2) analyze the forces impinging on the problem; (3) discuss alternative strategies; (4) evaluate and choose among alternative strategies; (5) specify consultee and consultant responsibilities; (6) implement the chosen strategy; and (7) evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Actual problem solving rarely follows discrete steps, and communication (genuineness, listening and encouraging consultee verbalizations, empathy, paraphrasing, continuation, etc.) is essential. Lewin's Field Theory is used as a framework for conceptualizing change in schools, and its tenets are applied to the steps in delivering psychological services. Contains 29 references. (KM)

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A SEVEN STEP PROBLEM SOLVING METHOD FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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"There is nothing so practical as a good theory"

F.W. Dorpfeld

Claude Levy-Leboyer writes in his 1988 paper in The American Psychologist: "Two thoughts emerge from analysis of "successful" and "failed" attempts to apply psychology: A. Far from being nonapplied, psychology is too easily and too loosely applied; and B. its application follows the well-known rules governing change agents, which reminds us that, as social scientists, we should not forget to apply our own knowledge (p. 779). The central thesis of this paper is: the School Psychologist must become better acquainted with basic principles of applying and communicating psychological interventions if he is to be accepted in the school setting. A secondary tenet of this paper will be to introduce Lewin's "Field Theory" as a method of conceptualizing change in the school setting.

Dating back to the very inception of contemporary school psychology, the raison d'etre for the field has been to infuse the benefits of psychological theory, research, and practice into the daily lives of children and the fabric of schooling. It is generally true that this lofty vision has yet been realized

Gutkin and Conoley, 1990). The school psychology literature is dominated by research pertaining to assessment, diagnostic refinements, and intervention (Reynolds and Clark, 1984). However, these important and necessary refinements may not help the school psychologist alter or refine his role in the school setting. In order to do this, the method of delivering the psychological "findings" is as important as the "findings" themselves. On far too many occasions, psychological interventions are improperly applied, neglected, or ignored by administrators, teachers, and parents. Bardon (1986) writes: "We are suggesting that the processes used by practicing school psychologists to communicate their knowledge are at least as important as the content of the knowledge that is communicated (p. 325)."

Far too often psychological input is dismissed because psychological interventions are seen as ineffectual, too complex, or at odds with the existing learning paradigm within a school district. The school psychologist's job is not only assessment but also, and perhaps, more importantly, teaching. Limitations of the interventions and expected outcomes need to be communicated freely by the school psychologist and when necessary, instructional inservices about psychological interventions may be needed for teachers.

Levy-Leboyer (1988) has written:

> "Three characteristics give applied psychology its heuristic value: lack of routine, complexity, and human plasticity. ... Contrary to the naive view of psychological determinism, there is no standard routine in applied psychology. Every problem or situation is unique. This is why our clients (teachers)* are so often disappointed when we can present no immediate solution for their problem and when we refuse to adopt a conventional attitude. Recognizing the uniqueness of each problem forces applied psychologists to develop analytic tools and adequate concepts to describe and account for the specific features of each situation. This need to look beyond the immediate situation has led to the development of new constructs that then stimulated new research. This has been the case for concepts like cognitive complexity, Type A behavior, field dependence, learned helplessness, initiating structure, and instrumentality, to give but a few obvious examples" (p. 785).

This message needs to be communicated to all involved in designing and implementing psychological interventions in the school setting. Complex problems may require complex solutions and often there are considerable time requirements needed in examining a situation so informed and effective interventions can be implemented.

*Added by author.

However before interventions are communicated and even before the school psychologist begins to conceptualize how problems can be addressed, he needs to be aware of where he is in relation to the school structure. From the superintendent of schools, to the regular classroom teacher, to the custodian, to the members of the Board of Education, how these individuals view the school is determined by where they are in relation to it. The school psychologist, when communicating to these members of the school culture, needs to be aware of where they fit into the school structure. Failure to do this limits the possibilities of ever communicating effectively in this setting.

In addition, many of those who comprise the school culture do not seek change or react positively to it. The school psychologist must plant and nuture the idea throughout the school culture that others see the world differently than they do. When some in the school culture talk about the need to refer a child for an assessment or treatment, a determination must be made regarding whether that referral is being initiated for legitimate causes or by some conscious or unconscious cogntive or cultural bias. Interestingly, tolerance and acceptance are often the first qualities lost in the school culture.

It should also be noted that there is nothing unusual in the fact that many of those who comprise the school culture do not

seek change or react enthusiastically to it. In this respect school personnel are no different than those who make up any culturally distinct organization (Sarason, 1982). However, for the school psychologist what is important is the nature and sources of resistance and how these effect the intervention. To understand and relate the nature of this problem is a most difficult and important problem. However, recognition of this problem is the first step in finding possible solutions.

Sarason (1982) writes:

> "... those who are responsible for introducing change into the school culture tend to have no clear conception of the complexity of the process -- no organized set of principles that explicitly takes account of the complexity of the setting in its social psycholgical and sociological aspects; its usual ways of functioning and changing; and its verbalized and unverbalized traditions and values -- one may ask, How come? It is fashionable, and no end elevating of self-esteem, to answer the question (or to explain any educational failure and nonsense) by derogating the intelligence or personal capabilities of individuals. But the answer, which is neither simple or clear, is not in the characterisitics of individuals. Such explanations, in the present instance, would effectively distract one from recognizing that what is at issue is the absence of formulated and testable theories of how the school works, the conditions wherein it changes, and the processes whereby changes occur" (p.9).

So what does this mean for the school psychologist? First and foremost the school psychologist must have some understanding of how change occurs in any complex, highly organized setting.

Second, the school psychologist must know where to find research dealing with this change. Unfortunately, those fields which have historically dealt whith this issue (political science, sociology, anthropology, history) have rarely turned their attention to the school setting. Third, the school psychologist must have a clear understanding and the ability to synthesize research from other fields and use it in the school setting.

What is missing in the schools is symptomatic of the isolation of education from the social and behavioral sciences, an isolation that stems historically from the snobbish traditions of academia (Sarason, Davidson, Blatt, 1962). What is in great need of study is how to effectively promote positive change in a school culture. The question for the school psychologist becomes how to effectively deliver psychological services in this culture.

II. DELIVERING PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL

As an introduction to this section, I would like to quote Sarason (1982) who writes:

> "Numerous people from a variety of fields, previously unconnected with schools, have approached a school or or school system to do a study requiring the cooperation of children, teachers or both. Far fewer people have approached the schools with the specific aim of rendering some kind of service within the schools, requiring that in some way they become part of the school. In either case, one of the most frequent reactions they come away with is that the school is a "closed" place that views with marked suspicion

> any outsider who "wants in" in some way. The outsider feels he is viewed as some kind of intelligence agent whose aims, if not nefarious, are other than what he states. The adjective that the puzzled outsider applied most frequently to school personnel are insecure, uncooperative, paranoid, and rigid. The adjectives vary, depending on how far beyond the principal's or superintendent's office the outsider gets" (pp. 10-11).

This is often a fair assessment of how a school psychologist feels when introduced to a school culture. This is not a suprising reaction if one remembers that in every culture there is a distinct pattern which governs the roles and interrelationships within that setting. The structure antedates any one individual and will continue in the absence of the individual. Change, especially when undefined, threatens the stability of that structure, and suspiciousness and defensiveness are its sequelae. This structure also defines the permissible ways in which goals and problems will be approached. In addition, that existing structure of a setting or a culture is but one of many alternative structures possible in that setting and the existing structure is a barrier to recognition and experimentation with alternative ones. Garner (1966) has shown and discussed in relation to visual and auditory patterns or structures, the response to any one pattern cannot be understood without considering the matrix of possible patterns from which the particular one was taken. Analagously, the significance of the structure of a setting has to be viewed in light of alternative structures. The ability to generate alternative

structures, and the capacity to evaluate each alternative dispassionately in terms of the stated purposes of the setting, is a difficult theoretical problem. As Sarason (1982) comments, it is near-impossible for most people because it confonts them with the necessity of changing their thinking, then changing their actions, and finally, changing the overall structure of the setting. The school psychologist should always be offering alternative ways of thinking about the "regularities" or "musts" about the school and classroom structure not so much to proscribe change as to assess how deeply ingrained these structures lie.

In consultation, the school psychologist's ability to deliver services to a child depends on meaningful collaboration with consultees (e.g. teachers, parents). No psychological services, no matter how accurate or appropriate, will actually be delivered to that child unless consultees take action. As such, the establishment of an open relationship between the school psychologist and his consultees is of paramount importance.

Gutkin (1988) has argued that it is necessary for school psychologists to focus the bulk of their professional time and energy on adults rather than on children if they hope to serve children effectively. In the more traditional system of direct service delivery, the psychologist's primary contact is with a client. School psychologists working from an indirect service delivery model interact primarily with care-givers, who work directly and intensively with clients.

The goal of consultation in the school setting is usually to

help develop strategies to solve problems. The specifics of the problem-solving process have been discussed extensively (Parnes, Noller, & Biondi, 1977). Osborn (1963) sets forth most of the basic principles of the problem-solving process, and a growing body of research relating these processes to meaningful clincial and consultative phenomena have been established (Heppner and Krauskopf, 1987; Dixon and Glover, 1984; D'Zurilla and Goldfried, 1971). For the purposes of this paper the specific problem-solving process described will be a synthesis of the work of Caplan (1963) and Gutkin and Curtis, (1982).

Although presented as specific sequence of events, actual problem solving rarely proceeds in a stepwise fashion. Movement between steps is quite frequent and is expected. The psychoanalytic, gestalt, behavioral, and ecological perspectives have been included in this model. At different times in the consulting process, all three perspectives can be used singly and in conjunction to help deal with problems.

STEP 1

DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE PROBLEM. Defining and clarifying the presenting problem is a critical first step in the problem-solving process. Bergan and Tombari (1976) reported, that "once consultative problem solving was carried through problem identification, problem solution almost invariably resulted" (p.

12). It is generally believed that the manner in which a problem is defined during this step sets important parameters for the remainder of the consultation inateraction (Witt and Elliot, 1983).

A common error made by the consulting psychologist at this point is to assume that the consultee's first verbalization of a problem statement corresponds to the consultee's major concern. It is, however, not unusual for the consultee's initial problem statement to serve as either an intentional or an unintentional veil behind which to hide the real concern. In some instances, the consultee may need to establish a strong sense of trust in the consultant prior to the sharing of highly sensitive information. In presenting a "safe" problem, the consultee may be testing whether he or she can trust the psychologist. The psychologist's skill in presenting a nonevaluative stance with students, teachers and parents should increase the probability that the consultee will eventually share potentially more threatening problems with the psychologist.

This step is also very important in helping to prioritorize problems when the psychologist is asked to help with numerous problems with one child or in one setting. In such situations, the consultant's listening skills and ability to help establish priorities for the component parts of the problem situation will be important.

In addition, not all problems are amenable to psychological intervention in the school setting. As Levy-Leboyer (1988) has

written, psychological interventions often fail because psychology is too hastily or too quickly applied. It is critically important that the school psychologist know what kinds of interventions are effective and available. Hastily applied or poorly thought out interventions have no place in the school setting.

STEP 2

ANALYZE THE FORCES IMPINGING ON THE PROBLEM

The major tasks at this stage are to collect detailed information pertaining to the indentified problem and to discern the ecological context within which the problem is occuring. Whatfactors contribute to the problem or impede its resolution? How do these factors interrelate with each other and cause or support the continuation of the problem? Of equal relevance, but often overlooked is the question of which resources are available that could be used to facilitate the problem's resolution? Resources of time and/or materials should never be offered unless the consultant is certain that the time and/or materials are available.

STEP 3

DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

At this point in the process, the consultee and the

consultant should have a clear understanding of the problem definition and the ecological context within which the problem occurs. An examination of options available and frank examination of all solutions should be discussed. Typically, consultees strive to generate "the best solution" as quickly as possible and are resistant to generating new ideas once they believe they have found "the answer" (Gutkin and Curtis, 1990). In addition, the consultant and the consultee should work together to establish realistic interventions under the time constraints of the school setting.

STEP 4

EVALUATE AND CHOOSE AMONG ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

After completing Step 3, the consultant and the consultee must choose which strategy or strategies to implement. Unfortunately, individuals are often unable to recognize the best solution for a problem among a list of alternatives. The psychologist should strive to ensure that the choice of strategies to be used in response to the presenting problem is not made hastily and to help the consultee review each alternative from a variety of perspectives. The final choice of intervention however, rests with the consultee, who must carry out the treatment plan.

When reviewing the list of alternatives, the consultant and

consultee should consider the impact of each alternative (Martens and Witt, 1988). That is, they must remember that classrooms are systems. As such, changes in any one aspect of the system will result in changes in other aspects of the system as well. Sarason (1982) provides a classic discussion of how failure to view change from an ecological perspective often results in unintended outcomes that directly undercut the most significant effects of a planned change.

STEP 5

SPECIFY CONSULTEE AND CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The planned intervention may "fall between the cracks" and, to everyone's frustration, little will be accomplished if this important step is overlooked. It is always important to specify the "who," "where," "when," and "how" issues after a course of action has been agreed upon. Attention to the seemingly minor details can make the difference between an effective intervention and ineffectuality. Happe's (1982) research indicated providing explicit instructions to consultees for carrying out treatment plans is one of the methods most frequently cited by school-based consultants as leading to treatment implementation by consultees. Clearly, there are too many cases where lack of attention to details has resulted in the failure of what might have

been an effective intervention (Gutkin and Curtis, 1990).

STEP 6

IMPLEMENT THE CHOSEN STRATEGY

A school psychologist should never assume a verbal agreement to implement a particular intervention necessarily means that the intervention will be carried out. If the school psychologist has done a good job of involving the consultee in the design and selection of the proposed intervention, there should be fewer instances of failure due to consultee resistance. There are many legitimate problems that consultees encounter that reduce their motivation to carry through with a planned intervention. For example, the consultee may have tried the plan for a few days and have been disappointed with the results. Perhaps the planned intervention took more time than was originally anticipated. Or possibly, the planned intervention may be met by the consultee with unconscious resistance because it replicates a situation that is too threatening for the consultee (Caplan, 1963).

STEP 7

EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVENTION

Follow-up of treatment implementation is a crucial element of effective intervention. The school psychologist's role at this stage is to work with the consultee to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken as a result of the consultation process. In those instances where intervention has either been ineffective or less than adequately effective, the consultant should encourage the consultee to join him in returning to an appropriate earlier point in the process. Even when treatment had produced good results, the psychologist should continue to check in from time to time to support the consultee and determine if any changes in the intervention are needed.

THE BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

While the steps outlined above are extremely important for the success of any psychological intervention in the school setting, it is also important for the school psychologist to be well versed in the basics of communications. This "technology of communication" (e.g. genuiness, listening and encouraging consultee verbalizations, empathy, paraphrasing, confrontation, etc.) must be well understood by the school psychologist. Gutkin and Curtis (1982) write: "At its most basic level, consultation is an interpersonal exchange. As such, the consultant's success is going to hinge largely on his or her communication and relationship skills" (p. 822). This statement remains valid and

should be etched in the minds of all school psychologists.

Unfortunately, our knowledge base regarding the technology of communication has advanced very little recently (Gutkin and Curtis, 1990). With some exceptions (Anderson et al., 1986; Cleven and Gutkin, 1988) a review of the school psychology journals reveals little published research directed at psychologists' communication processes with consultees and clients. Much of the relevant theoretical and empirical work (Bergan, Byrnes, and Kratochwill, 1979; Bergan, 1977) was published well over a decade ago. Improving our understanding of the interpersonal communication processes that occur during school based interactions appears to need much more investigation.

Despite this, there appears to be an increasing awareness of an important research tool that should facilitate new research in this area. The lag sequential analysis (Gottman and Notarius, 1976; Benes and Gutkin, 1989), a statistical technique for testing the probabilities that "event A is followed by "event B," "event C," or some other event may lead to more investigations in this area. The chief advantage of this technique over traditional ANOVA and regression approaches is that it provides the researcher with a "moving picture" rather than a "still photograph" of consultative interactions (Gutkin and Curtis, 1990). Rather than examining static and summative data such as the total frequency of specific types of verbalizations, lag sequential analysis can be used to address the sequential

patterns of communication between school psychologists and consultees. Hopefully, the qualitatively superior insights that are possible with lag sequential analysis will enable researchers to examine the interactive processes in greater detail than has been the case until now.

LEWIN'S FIELD THEORY AS A MODEL FOR CONSULTATION

> Life is a reality to be experienced not a problem to be solved.
>
> S. Kirkegaard

Lewin's Field Theory (e.g. 1951) presents an interesting model for describing change not only in the classroom but also in the culture of the schools. Because field theory can be applied to many layers of the school culture, it appears to have greater explanatory power than strict behavioral models that look at response-reinforcement relationships. It also appears to be a more practical theory because it does a much better job of explaining the phenomenological experience of teaching, consulting and working in the schools than does a strict behavioral perspective.

In this section there will be a brief description of Field Theory and then the seven step problem solving method detailed above will be discussed within the framework of Field Theory.

Lewin (1951) wrote: "The basic statements of a field theory are that a. behavior has to be derived from a totality of coexisting facts, b. these coexisting facts have the character of a "dynamic field in so far as the state of any part of this field depends on every other part of the field" (p.25). For Lewin behavior (B) was a function of the person (P) and the environment (E) or B=f (P,E). In this formula P and E are independent of each other. Behavior depends neither on the past nor on the future but on the present field. For Lewin, understanding the behavior of an individual was only possible if the person and his environment were seen as one constellation made up of independent factors. The sum of these factors made up a person's lifespace (LSp).

Within an educational setting, Lewin felt the whole environment with its social and cultural implications needed to be seen as <u>one concrete dynamic whole</u>. Lewin (1936) writes: "One will have to understand the dymanic interrelations between the various parts and properties of the situation in which, and as part of which, the child is living" (p.17).

When school psychologist's consult with a classroom teacher about a specific instructional technique or behavioral strategy for a student, do they also consider the possible impact that strategy or technique might have for other students in the classroom ? Will the intervention lead to other students seeing the teacher as more democratic or autocratic? Does the intervention dramatically change the social climate of the

classroom? These are all important questions that may not be considered by school psychologists prior to implementing an intervention.

Lewin (1935) also points out that the child, through experience learns to survey ever larger relations. The extension of the child's world beyond the momentary present into the future is an important part of cognitive development. Lewin (1935) writes:

> "...the child experiences, for example, that some time after lightning, the thunder comes; that he is scolded when he upsets a cup. In many respects more fundamental, however, is the development of action wholes, the child no longer strives solely for present things, not only has wishes that must be realized at once, but his purposes grasp toward a tomorrow. When he is somewhat older, not only events several months past but also events several months in the future play a considerable role in present behavior. The goals which determine the child's behavior are thrown continually further into the future" (p. 173).

Here again we see another factor that must be taken into consideration when developing intervention plans. What effect does the passing of time and maturation of the student's cognitive structure have on the intervention? In addition, it also helps one to understand why some reinforcements are effective for short periods and why some supposed reiforcements are not effective at all.

Other constructs proposed by Lewin that have found their way into educational research include: social fields, space of free movement, topological relations, conflict, and social climate.

Maruyama (1992) points out some of the broad principles of Lewin's theory and integrates them with some current educational trends. Maruyama contends that building strong linkages between schools and communities, site-based management, providing students with opportunities to explore issues freely, seeing teachers as resources, and providing students with opportunities to learn how to set personal goals and attempt to attain them can all be found in Lewin's theories.

Empirical studies that look at student motivation, cooperative learning, social climate, and conflict management can be directly linked to Lewin's theories (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981; Maruyama, 1992). One can easily conceive of a classroom as a lifespace and using Lewin's ideas consult with teachers and administrators about the physical layout of the classroom, the opportunities for cooperative learning experiences, explain lack of motivation in students, and provide succesful multicultural educational instructional experiences.

Maruyama (1992) writes:

> " ... for educators looking for ways to improve their schools, research syntheses provided solid evidence that both acheivement outcomes and the social climate of the classroom could be improved if cooperative goal structures were used more frequently. Furthermore, insofar as cooperative learning techniques employ heterogeneous groupings and are by their nature more engaging and active, they also meet some of the demands for transforming classroom structures to make them more active and

> and more multicultural. Notably, use of cooperative goal structures yields classrooms that are "student centered" rather than being exclusively "teacher centered" (pp. 162-163).

Trachtman in a 1993 article writes:

> "I came to understand behavior more as an interaction of person and environment (a la Kurt Lewin's field theory) but to understand the person component as including unconscious as well as conscious ingredients and also including other lineaments of psychodynamic and psychoanalytic theory. I came to appreciate a phenomenological perspective which emphasizes the importance of understanding the environment as experienced by the person" (pp.3-4).

The next section of this paper will briefly look at the seven step problem solving method proposed within the body of the paper and attempt to look at the steps within a Field Theory framework.

STEP 1: DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE PROBLEM

As stated earlier, it is important to be sure that a psychological intervention is appropriate for the specific problem being addressed. If it is, it is also important to conceive of the problem as not residing within either the student or teacher, for example, but within the lifespace of the student and the teacher. Behavior has multiple determinants and it is important to conceive of solutions within the total environment in which they are being proposed.

STEP 2: ANALYZE THE FORCES IMPINGING ON THE PROBLEM

At this point it is important to not only look at the ecological context in which the problem is occuring but also to try to understand the way the child perceives the situation. Motivation, self-efficacy, self-esteem, frustration tolerance, along with a myriad of other issues need to be considered at this time.

STEP 3: DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

Here again it is important for the consultant and the consultee to look at the effect the alternative strategies will have on the "total environment" of the setting. Will the social climate of the setting change? How will this intervention effect others in the setting? Will seemingly insurpassable barriers be set up in a child against those who have intervened? What may be the unexpected effects of each proposed strategy? These and other important questions like these must be thought through before a strategy is chosen.

STEP 4: EVALUATE AND CHOOSE AMONG ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

As stated earlier in this paper, the ecology of the setting and the possible change in relationships within that setting need to be discussed throughly. The efficacy of the proposed intervention needs to be discussed at length. Also, if nothing is done, what effect will time have on the problem? Lewin correctly points out that as a child develops, his ability to delay reinforcement increases. An informal determination of the child's cognitive complexity and temporary situational stressors needs to be made. For example, has there been a recent traumatic event within the family (i.e. divorce, death, birth of a sibling)? How differentiated, using Lewin's terminology, is the child? These and questions like these must be considered before any intervention is selected.

STEP 5: SPECIFY CONSULTANT AND CONSULTEE RESPONSIBILITES

If we conceive of behavior as a function of person and environment (B=f(PE)), then both consultant and consultee need to be aware of not only the child's overt behavior but also the environment from which the behavior emanates. Often merely a change in instructor helps assuage a problem. Similarly, a change in a student's location in a classroom often leads to positive changes. Classroom management styles also can be modified in addition to a specific behavioral intervention for a student.

STEP 6 IMPLEMENT THE CHOSEN STRATEGY

As stated earlier, motivation to implement and carry through a strategy on the part of the consultee is important. Also the unconscious and consious bias of the consultee is also very important to the success of an intervention (Caplan, 1963). Another factor that is very important to the success of an intervention is making a determination about the behavioral repertoire of the child. Are there any internal barriers within the child or barriers in the environment that do not allow for a successful intervention? For example, are we asking too much of a child with impulse control difficulties to be perfectly behaved during recess in the playground? Are we asking too much of a sexually abused seven year old girl to feel comfortable and learn with a male instructor who closely resembles her abuser?

STEP 7 EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVENTION

The effectiveness of an intervention needs to be assessed on several levels. Certainly if problematic behaviors have improved the intervention may be called: "successful". But, in addition to this, the effect of the intervention on the whole system needs to be evaluated. Certainly if other parts of the environment

become problematic after an intervention than the "success" of that intervetion becomes more equivocal. Something akin to the psychoanalytic notion of "symptom substitution" may be occuring within the system. This can be seen when teachers say things like: 'Now that we've got Johnny settled down, Brian has become a real pain!" Or, She's done so much better with her academic work but now I can't keep her from stealing out of my desk." In addition, interventions do have an effect on the social climate of a setting. They also have an effect on the consultant -- consultee relationship and on the consultee-child relationship and this reciprocality should always be considered during the entire problem solving phase.

SUMMARY:

Psychological interventions are too easily and too loosely applied in many settings (Levy-Leboyer, 1988). Often the most important first step in any intervention is often overlooked. The first question that needs to be addressed is: "Is a psychological intervention appropriate in this situation?"

School psychologists must become better acquanited with basic principles of applying and communicating interventions in the school setting. Length of treatment, expected outcomes, and

the amount of time and energy required by all involved in the intervention needs to be explicitly stated before many interventions are implemented.

School psychologists also need to know where they are situated in their school's social organization. They need to know something about how change effects any complex, highly organized social system like the school. In addition, school psychologists need to know where to find research on change in social organizations and synthesize that information into their practices.

One theory that may help school psychologists when consulting is Lewin's Field Theory. His ideas have been very influencial in many areas of psychological research (Hall & Lindzey, 1957; Maruyama, 1992). They also help the school psychologist consider the topology, lifespace and interaction between teacher and student when designing an intervention.

Last, but possibly most important, the school psychologist should be an expert in communications theory. In many instances, the school psychologist is trying to "sell" a different notion about "being in the world" to the consultee and often will need to muster all the skills of persuasion he has in order to effect any change at all.

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